

The Gospel Trumpeter

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

UNITY & TRUTH

"So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. Eze. 34:12 Jer. 32:39"

"But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished. Rev. 10:7 Matt. 24:31"

SOUNDING FORTH THE SEVENTH AND LAST TRUMPET

Vol. 44 April 2014 No. 4



Church of God Tabernacle in Newark, Ohio

*"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord."*

Psalm 122:1

"For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

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This monthly religious journal is published for the benefit of the Church of God universally. It is our supreme purpose to reach the world for Christ through the printed page. Our burden is to reveal the truth of God's Word to all mankind, to expose sin and error, war against apostasy, and to eradicate the longstanding traditions of men that have no biblical foundations.

Brother Roger L. Decker Editor
Workers Too Numerous to Mention

THE CHURCH OF GOD BELIEVES IN:

- A personal God (John 4:24)
- A divine Christ (John 1:1, 14)
- An infallibly inspired Bible (2 Tim. 3:16-17)
- Salvation from sin (Matt. 1:21)
- The new birth (John 3:3, 5-7)
- A holy life (Luke 1:73-75; Titus 2:12)
- Sanctification (1 Thess. 5:23)
- Unity of God's people (John 17:21, Eph. 4)
- Divine, physical healing (James 5:14-16)
- The ordinances (Matt. 28:19-20; John 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 11:23, 34)
- Eternal life (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43)
- The Trinity (1 John 5:7, 8)

SOME SPIRITUAL FACTS

PERTAINING TO THE CHURCH

- Jesus organized it (Matt. 16:18)
- On a good foundation (Eph. 2:20; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- Christ governs it (Eph. 1:22-23; Isa. 9:6)
- God admits members (1 Cor. 12:13-18)
- Sin puts you out of it (Rom. 11:22; Ex. 32:33)
- The saved only are members (erJohn 15:2-6)
- Membership is offered to all (Rev. 22:17)
- Final rewards (Rev. 20:12-15; 21:3-4; 22:14)
- Bible name of the Church (Acts 20:28; Gal. 1:13; John 17:11)

We reserve the right to edit and/or decline any material for any reason. We are not responsible for unsolicited articles or items.

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Vol. 44 April 2014 No. 4

Annual Financial Report

Ezekiel 33:1-11 states: "Again the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

The Prophet spoke very sobering words that still ring true. An awesome responsibility lies at the feet of God's people to get the Word to a lost world. To this end was *The Gospel Trumpeter* born. The single purpose remains today to reach out with a burden for lost souls and to speak the Truth to a religious world who is caught in the confusion of sectarian division.

To accomplish this task, messages must be preached and transcribed. Next begins an editing process. Once edited into its final form, it is then organized to fit into the pages of *The Gospel Trumpeter*. Following this, it is sent to the printer to be printed, collated, stapled, labeled for mailing, and bundled for shipment. In all, it is a great labor that requires hundreds of hours of work and thousands of dollars to operate. Since the very beginning, *The Gospel Trumpeter* has been mailed to subscribers without a given subscription price, so as to make it available to all who wish to receive it. Many send regular contributions for this endeavor, and the local congregation pays all the costs that exceed the contributions. We truly appreciate the Lord for His help as well as those whom He has laid on them a burden to work in this ministry.

Statement of Condition for 12 months ending January 31, 2014

	Income	Expenses
Donations/Offerings	\$15,003.00	
Wages		44,210.00
Payroll Taxes/Insurance/Workers' Comp		21,666.00
Supplies		\$ 34,012.00
Equipment Purchased		3,483.00
Postage		63,436.00
Maintenance & Repairs		4,787.00
Miscellaneous Expenses		7,125.00
 Subtotals	 \$15,003.00	 \$178,719.00
 Balance paid out of the general fund of the Church of God congregation at Newark, OH		 \$163,716.00

Matthew 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring the disciples word.

The Account of the Resurrection



Brother Roger L. Decker

A Message of the Church

This month many people's minds are turned toward the Resurrection, and we certainly want to join right in and speak about that. We want to look at the account of the Resurrection. Critics of the Bible try to criticize the Gospel writers because they differ a little on the events that happened concerning the Resurrection. However, even though they differ a little concerning the way they express it and regarding some of the happenings, one thing they each agree on, and that is,

the tomb was empty.

The first two visitors at the tomb were Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. Our Scripture text says in verse 1, "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre." They were the same women who were with Jesus at the Cross.

We read in Matthew 27:54-56: "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared

greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children." They were there when He was laid in the tomb.

Verses 59-61 say: "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth. And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the

door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre." After the Resurrection, when they saw the empty tomb, the angel encouraged them to believe.

The angel said in verse 6 of our Scripture lesson, "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." The angel of the Lord was encouraging them to believe what he said, and then he said in verse 7, "And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." When those sisters left, they left with great joy, and the Resurrection still brings joy to the Christian's heart today.

Verse 8 says, "And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word." God rewarded them for their love. The Resurrection is the message of the church. The morning-time church proclaimed it with boldness and confidence.

We read in Acts 4:1, "And as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them." What stirred the Sadducees, the priests, the elders, and the captain of the temple? Verse 2 states, "Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." They preached the Resurrection, and they preached it with great power.

Acts 4:32-33 says: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

Rolling the Stone Away

In Acts, Chapter 17, the Apostle

Paul was at Athens. Verses 18-19 read: "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the Resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?" Verse 32 tells us, "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter."

What does the Resurrection mean to you? It means the best that false religion in the world has cannot begin to come close to the power of God. Matthew 27:62-66 states: "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." What did he tell them? He said to "make it as sure as ye can." This ought to show us, church, that nothing can keep God in and nothing can keep God out.

Who rolled the stone away? The angel did, and an "angel" did the same thing for you and me. Paul was an angel. The Bible says in Galatians 4:14, "And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." The seven letters of the revelation were written to the angels, or the pastors, of the Church of God. An "angel" rolled the stone away in my life. My heart was sealed with

an old stony heart, and the world had made it as sure as it could; but God sent His angel, through the preaching of the Gospel. He rolled the stone away, and I came forth a new creature in Jesus Christ.

For some, that "stone" is sealed very well, and the world always sets a watch over it. Whenever you start getting close to God, the world starts its mockery and accusations. If you will listen to the "angel," and the words he tells you, that stone will roll away. The old stony heart will roll away, and you can rise far above the sins of this old world. The preaching of Jesus Christ will change things; it changed my life.

At one time, I thought the Gospel was foolishness. I thought going to the house of God was for old ladies, old men, and sissies, but I certainly found out differently. At the age of twenty-seven when my stony heart came under the sound of the Gospel, the angel of God began to pour out the Truth. When I obeyed the Gospel, that angel rolled my stony heart away, and I blossomed forth into a new creature in Jesus Christ.

Acts 8:5 speaking of Philip, says, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." If you are not saved, that is what you need in your life. You need Jesus Christ. If you are saved, you need to continue with Jesus Christ. The Resurrection means that God has accepted Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for my sin and your sin.

The Blood of the Lamb

During the time of Israel's exodus from Egypt, when God sent the plague upon Pharaoh concerning the death of the firstborn, in each household a lamb was slain, and that lamb was not just any old lamb from the flock. Moses told the people in Exodus 12:5, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats." Verse 7 reads, "And they shall take

of the blood [of the lamb], and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat of it." When they did that and the angel passed through Egypt that night, the life of the firstborn was spared. When the angel saw the blood, he passed over that house. That is the reason, dear one, you need to stay under the blood. This was the best that the law could do.

We read in Hebrews 7:19, "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." God has provided us with a Lamb called the Lamb of God. John 1:29 says, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Our Lamb is without blemish. Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1:18-19: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of the lamb without blemish and without spot."

Today you and I are living under the dispensation of a better Lamb and better blood. The blood of Old Testament sacrifices could stay the hand of the plague, but it could never take away sin. We have a better sacrifice, better blood, and it is not applied to a literal door post, but rather to our hearts by faith. When we take faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, the death angel has to pass over. We, like Israel, have our loins girded, our shoes on our feet, and our staff in our hand. As we partake of God's Word, it causes us to walk in the light.

First John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." False religion teaches forgiveness of sin, but it also teaches that you never get away from sin. It teaches that sin is always present in your life. If that were the case, then

we should have stayed under the old sacrifice; but God provided something better for us—better blood and a better sacrifice. Our sacrifice will take away sin. Thank God, we do not have to sin anymore. God will save you from any sin if you are willing to turn from it and if you want to be free. In the Old Testament, many times the way that God dealt with the sinner was to kill the sinner, but under the new covenant, God puts away the sin and lets the sinner go free to sin no more.

The Head Over All Things to the Church

The Resurrection means that we have a head over the church in a headquarters. We have One who did not start a church and then die. He did not leave the people to wander about in confusion, but our Head, the Head of the church, still reigns today just as much as He ever did, and He is still in the same headquarters that God put Him in. Someone may ask, "Where is the headquarters of the Church of God?" It is in Heaven. Why is it in Heaven? That is where the Head is.

In Ephesians 1:21-22, as Paul was speaking of Christ, he said: "Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." The Head of the Church of God is not Doctor So-and-So. Our Head lives in Heaven. God still has a church, and it has the life of Jesus Christ.

You are not going to find Christ in control in the realms of Babylon. People like to have a minister preach about Christ, but they do not want him to get into specifics. The day is getting darker and darker in the world, and even in the religious world. Why do you think liberals and all these different groups are having their way? Why do you think gays are having their way? Why do you think all that stuff is

going before the United States Supreme Court? Why do you think that is going on? Well, there is a reason, and it is not just because men have gotten worse; it is because preachers have stopped crying out about these conditions in the pulpits. Today some preachers are marrying couples of the same sex and sanctioning that. May God have mercy on their souls, because they are going to meet that at the Judgment, no matter what the law of the land says. The people can vote all they want to, but the government bypasses the people anymore. If you live on this earth long enough, you are going to see lots of changes if God does not intervene.

Feminism is another thing that has affected our country. Feminists say they do not need a man. God said to replenish the earth, and there is no way on earth that two men can multiply or two women can multiply. Those people who advocate homosexuality and lesbianism can be thankful that their parents were not lesbians or gays; they would not be here.

God has a church, and the church is going to shine brighter and brighter the darker the world gets. Now, you need to hold right in there because even church people are going to rise up against you. It is not going to be persecution of the world. God's people can handle that. It will be people who once claimed to be Church of God and they have changed their minds about the things they have been taught. The things of the world do not look too bad to them anymore because they are in division, and there is a spirit that goes with it.

The Holy Spirit

If there was not any resurrection, then the Holy Spirit would not have been given; and if there was no Holy Spirit, then you and I could not be saved or enjoy New Testament salvation. Jesus said in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away:

for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." There had to be a sacrifice acceptable to God before the Holy Spirit could be given. That is not difficult to understand. There had to be a cleansing for sin before the Holy Spirit would dwell within.

Why was the Holy Spirit not given ahead of the Cross? There was no cleansing for sin. Those people were in a transition period in the days of Jesus and the Apostles. There was a changing over, and until there was a Cross, people were still under the old Mosaic Law. That is the reason those disciples were told to tarry on the Day of Pentecost. They were believers. They believed in God, and they believed in Christ. They were not filled with the Holy Spirit until the Day of Pentecost. That is when the church went forth. God did not tell them to go forth before that day; He told them to tarry until they were endued with power from on high. We need the Holy Spirit today, but some people are very shallow when it comes to the Holy Spirit, and that is the reason the flesh controls them.

The Holy Spirit will not dwell in an unclean temple, but only one that is pure and holy by the blood of Jesus Christ. If there had not been a resurrection and the Holy Spirit had not come, then we would not have the power to live holy lives. Today there is much confusion about repentance and the blood. The blood of Jesus Christ forgives sin, but the blood of Jesus Christ does not give you the power to live free from sin. According to Romans, Chapter 3, there is forgiveness of sins that are past. That is what Paul told the Romans, but how do you live in the future? You must be filled with the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that gives life and gives it more abundantly.

A Shining Light for All Mankind

The Resurrection gives us an example, or a pattern, for all man-

kind to see what kind of life pleases God. God raised up Jesus, and He raised Him up as a shining light for all mankind to look at. You and I are to be like Him. We are to live such a life that we invite others to take a look at our lives. Can you be like Jesus? It is not *can* you, but rather you *must* be.

First John 2:6 says, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Why did God do all of this? Why did He allow His Son to be mistreated? Why did He allow His Son to be mocked, to be beaten, and to suffer one of the most horrible deaths ever, a crucifixion? Why did He not do something? Jesus said once that His Father could dispatch thousands of angels, but He stood back and allowed it to happen. There is one word that tells us why, and that is love. I am not talking about love between a boy and a girl or even a husband and a wife; I am talking about "agape" love, a love that is deeper than any love you have ever heard of in your life or ever will see in your life. He allowed His Son to be beaten, persecuted, mocked, blasphemed, and lied on, all because He loves you and me.

You might be in the vilest of sin, but that is no reason to say that God does not love you, because He does love you. Now, if you are a sinner, He does not like what you are doing, but He loves you. John 3:16 tells us, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Do you know whom I heard quote that verse in a speech? I heard Ronald Reagan quote that when he was President of the United States. That is a far cry from what we hear today. He said: "Do you know what's wrong with the people? They don't read the Bible, because it's in the Bible that God's got everything needed for mankind."

First John 4:19 says, "We love him, because he first loved us." We love Him, because when He loved us, we were unlovable. We were not

always good to be around. Some of us were vile. Some of us were terrible people to be around, but God still loved us. Even when nobody else cared for us, God loved us.

If you love God, that will cause you to give your all to Him, obey Him, and believe Him. If you love God, then you will let Him reign supremely in your life, and you will be so happy that you did. I am so glad that I turned from the quagmire of sin, because I thought I was just going to finish life out the way I was. I really did not even know anything about living until Jesus Christ came into my heart, and He rolled the stone away. I thank God that I could come out of that tomb of sin as a new creature in Jesus Christ.

Maybe you have backslidden. Do not stay in that condition. If you do, you are asking for trouble. Something is going to come down the highway of life that you cannot handle, and when it comes, you need to have an anchor in Jesus Christ. Then you have something to hold on to until the storm passes by.

(Compact Disc TR-1144M)

What the Bible Says

The Apostle Paul said in Romans 6:1-2: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer wherein?" In verse 12 he continued, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

Verse 22: "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." In this same chapter Paul declares that we are the servants of the one we obey. Sin is obedience to Satan, not obedience to God.

1 Peter 1:22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

23 Being born again, not of

corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower

thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

God's Plan for Man



Brother Ula Bland

The Power of God's Word

I want you to think about how valuable the Word of God is. It tells you how to be saved and how to stay saved. If you follow God's instructions, you cannot go wrong. God did not make man just to make him and leave him without a plan. He has a plan for man because He is not willing that any should perish,

but He wants all people to come to repentance. He proved that by loving the world so much that He gave the very best He had. He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever would believe on Him should not perish, but would have everlasting life.

God made man holy, perfect, and upright; but man sought out many inventions. God loved man so

much that He gave him another chance by sending His Son into a sin-cursed world. One songwriter saw this, and he said, "*Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me.*" He said he once was lost but now is found. He was blind, but now he sees. God cared for mankind so much that He did not want man to perish, so He sent His Son into the world, and His Son

cared so much about mankind that He was willing to give His life to come down and die for man.

Jesus Christ said in John 15:13-14: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." The thought of being lost forever should draw you closer and closer to God. If you do not know the Lord and have not had your sins pardoned, just the thought of spending eternity in hell should cause you to want to be saved. God has made preparation for mankind so that he does not have to live in sin. He can be saved from all sin. Matthew 1:21 reads, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." The Scripture does not say He will save them *in* their sins, but *from* their sins.

God will give you power to live a life that is free from sin. Paul said in Romans 6:18, "Being then made free from sin, ye became a servant of righteousness." You cannot become a servant of righteousness until you get free from sin. You cannot serve two masters; you will love the one and hate the other one. I thank God for His Word and the plan that He has for man. He gave man the Word of God so that He could read His Word anytime.

Saint, you need to get in the Book and study the Word of God for yourself. Paul, writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:15, said, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." After Paul got saved, he said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). There is power in the Word of God, and there is power in obeying the Word of God. Paul said in Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow,

and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

The Word of God is not something that you should play around with. James said in James 1:22, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." There is something about the Word of God that will quicken you and enlighten you to the things that you need to know. You will never really know about God until you study about Him in His Word.

Take Heed to the Word

Proverbs 30:6 says, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." The Word of God is something that you should cherish, and you should not forsake assembling together with the saints. There is power in being among the saints, your brothers and sisters in Christ. You can draw encouragement from one another. Hebrews 10:25 states, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

I thank God for His instruction, because He wants man to be saved. Paul said, concerning literal Israel in Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God [they go to church, they pray, they sing, they have a zeal of God], but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." If you do not watch yourself, the same spirit will take hold of you.

I thank God for His Word and for His warning. He warns about these things that are going to come. Jesus said in John 10:27-28: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any

man pluck them out of my hand." As long as you are truly following Jesus, no one can pluck you out of His hand.

Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture [not just some of the Scriptures, he said all Scripture] is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." The Word of God is really precious, and God made it available so that everyone can have a Bible. If you do not have a Bible, you need to ask somebody for one. Someone will give you a Bible. It is up to you to study the Word of God.

It is good to take a preacher's word, but the preacher should point you to the Word of God. If you are sitting under a preacher and he is preaching the pure Word of God, and nothing but the truth, do not wander from the Word of God. David said in Psalm 119:9-11: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid [stored away] in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." He did not store the Word away to try to act as though he knew so much, but he stored away the Word so that he might not sin against God.

Purpose in Your Heart to Do What Is Right

At one time, David was like Joseph when Potiphar's wife tried to tempt Joseph. Joseph stood for what was right all the way. The secret of Joseph's success was that God was with him. Romans 8:31b tells us, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Potiphar's wife tried to tempt Joseph, but he would not let her tempt him. Joseph asked her a question in Genesis 39:19. He said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He did not mention sinning against Potiphar;

he said "How . . . can I . . . sin against God?"

Sin is an unnecessary thing to do. You do not have to do it. God does not tell you to do something that you cannot do. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." When God tells you to do something, He gives you the power to do it. The Holy Spirit goes right along with the Word. The only thing you have to have is the "want to." God is with what is right.

Daniel was living as a captive in Babylon, but there was no Babylon in Daniel. He purposed in his heart that he was not going to defile himself with the king's meat. That is what you have to do. You have to purpose in your heart, by the grace of God, you are not going to sin. Paul wrote in Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." No matter how many devils are after you, you can live soberly, righteously, and godly right in this present world. That is the power of God; that is the power of the Holy Spirit. You cannot do it in yourself, but by the help of God, you can do it.

As I said about Daniel, he was not going to defile himself with the king's meat. When you purpose in your heart that you are going to do right and do God's will, do you know what happens? God will come in and help you to do what you have purposed in your heart. God is with His Word; He is with what is right. If you want to do right, God is going to help you to do right. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may

be able to bear it."

What a mighty God we are serving! It is not man that we serve; we are serving God. We are serving an Almighty God; we are serving an all-knowing God. He knows how to deliver us out of temptation.

Power to Overcome Sin

You cannot live just any kind of life and expect God's favor. In Romans 6:1-2 Paul said: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" False religion teaches that once you are saved, you are always saved, no matter what you do. Friend, if you are a bad boy, you are the devil's bad boy. You can knock that false teaching in the head. That teaching is no good. That is the reason Jesus said in Matthew 7:15, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."

God's Word lets you know that your way is not His way, neither are your thoughts His thoughts. Too many people want to have their own way. They want to do what they want to do. When you give your heart to God, you are no longer your own. When you were your own, you messed up. Now you have Jesus Christ, and you have help from every side. You were bought with a price. If you are saved, you belong to Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Thank the Lord!

God wants man to be saved. David, seeing this, looked up and said in Psalm 8:4-6: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

John saw this thing, and he said in 1 John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed

upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The President would not want to call you his son, but you can be a son of God. Those who are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God.

God had a plan that was foolproof. Men have tried to destroy Truth down through the years, but they cannot do it. This Truth is ever living in Christ. He did not come down and die for us and then forget about us. He is on the right hand of God right at this precise minute making intercession for us. He is praying for us. We have a High Priest that can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet He was without sin.

Hebrews 4:15-16 states: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." If there was ever a time when we needed God, it is now.

First Peter 5:8 instructs, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Often I think about the love that God had for man. Also, I think about the love that God had for me, an insignificant person, when I was in my sin, doing everything against Him. One day He made it possible for me to hear His Word. I believe that God is going to make it possible for everybody to hear the Truth. The Word is God. John wrote in John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

Walk Not After the Flesh

God really cared for mankind, even after man was lost. If you are contemplating backsliding, where are you going to go? You have a good home with the Lord. You have brothers and sisters who are willing

to help you, sometimes more than your own kinfolk. Where are you going to go? Peter said to Jesus in John 6:68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Someone may say, "That's too much to do to bring into captivity *every* thought." He tells you that you can bring every thought to the obedience of Christ. Friend, you can do it. If God tells you that you can do it, you can. If you put forth the effort, you can do it.

The flesh will make you deny the things that God wants to do for you. The flesh will cause you to deny God. The flesh will agree with what is wrong. If somebody walks up to you and slaps you, the flesh will say, "Slap him back!" The Spirit of God will say: "Let him go; he does not know any better. Your face will soon stop burning." The flesh will say: "You have to hit him. You have to let him know that you don't like it." The next thing you know, you will be in a fight. The flesh will war against you. That is the reason Paul said you are not to walk after the flesh but after the Spirit. That is the route that you are going to have to take. You are going to have to deny the flesh.

The flesh is not going to Heaven, and it is not going to hell. The flesh

is going no further than the grave. That is the reason you cannot follow a fleshly mind. In Romans 8:1-4 Paul said: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

We walked after the flesh before we got saved, but once you get saved, there is no more walking after the flesh. We are walking after the Spirit now. Living this life is the best thing I ever did. God has the best. The world will try to tell you that they have the best, and the flesh will try to agree that they do have the best. Those who know the Lord know that God has the best. That is your great protection. No one can touch you unless God permits him to touch you. You are the apple of God's eye, the blessed old Church of God. Judgment must first begin at the house of God. First Peter 4:18 says, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

I really appreciate the help that God gives a person when He sees that he wants to do right. Consider what He did for the three Hebrew boys down in Babylon. We are living in a sinful world, but we do not have to be sinful. We are still the

light of the world. In Matthew 5:14 Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." Jesus said in verse 13, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

I want you to know that Jesus Christ is still saving people from their sins. He does not get tired of saving people. That was His purpose for coming into the world. Zacchaeus was short in stature, but he did not let that stop him from seeing Jesus. He ran ahead of the people and climbed up a sycamore tree because he wanted to see Jesus. He knew Jesus was going to come that way. When Jesus walked under the tree, He knew Zacchaeus was up in that tree. We read in Luke 19:5, "And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house."

Zacchaeus not only made haste and came down but also he came down confessing. He said in verse 8, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." In verse 9 Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house." First John 1:9 reads, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

(Compact Disc TR-127M)

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil."

I John 4:6-8

Philippians 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.

Colossians 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions [sufferings] of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

The Fellowship of His Sufferings



Part 2 of 2

Brother Emerson A. Wilson

Do You Care?

Do you have the burden for the work of God that you once had? During the church services, do you stand in the vestibule visiting while the Word of God goes forth? That is an earmark of a backslidden condition. Maybe you have not gotten that bad, but the same spirit which has taken some people that far is working on you if you do not have a burning soul burden. Was there a time when you would not miss a church service for hardly anything, but now at the least little thing, you run off here or there? You are not getting any joy out of that kind of living—you are just enduring it. Maybe your soul is blessed a little when someone's cup runs over; however, you need something

coming out of your own cup.

I could speak smooth things when I preach, and speak deceit. Deceit can come from two ways. First, the preacher can preach something he is not living and say how he loves God and how consecrated he is to God's cause, while all the time he is living a selfish life. Second, the saints can work a deception when they hear truth preached and know they do not do it, but they amen it. You need to throw on the brakes and do a little checking. Let us fill up that which is behind.

All I have to do is set aside some time and get right down to business with Jesus and say, "Lord, I want to fellowship your passion," and do you know what happens? There will be a multitude of things for me to do, beyond what I may feel the hu-

man strength can do. Why does God bring it on? I ask for it. All I have to do is to go a few days without that definite time spent alone with the Lord, and I begin to get calloused to the needs of others.

It is easy to become busy with things and forget someone else's burden. Do you know why you forget so easily? You do not have a real burden. When you have a real burden, you will not forget. If sadness were to come into your own home, then would you forget to pray about it?

What if Jesus had forgotten? You and I would not be saved. There would not be any salvation. Thank God, He did not forget! He remembered me, and He remembered you, and He interceded in our behalf.

It is amazing how quickly

people can become calloused to the point that things do not affect them as they once did. Friend, when that happens, you need to be ashamed of the way you present the burdens before the Lord. It is very easy to become so enwrapped in the soft wool of self-indulgence that the cries from the far and the near never reach the soul that is at ease. There is a spirit of "eat, drink, and be merry," for tomorrow we die. It can overcome a saint. He knows that So-and-So is dying, but he does not get excited, because "I may get cancer in the next six months, so I have to live now while I can." We are not here to eat and drink and be merry – we are here to suffer.

Agonizing for Souls

It is nothing to be invited to somebody's house for a meal or ice cream, but how long has it been since one of your Christian brothers or sisters has asked you to come over and agonize before God for a lost community? It is in the picture that, "as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children" (Isaiah 66:8). The word *travail* means "under great mental stress and heart burden; to agonize." Paul said that he agonized for Rome. Does that sound like Jesus? Speaking of Jesus, Luke 22:44 tells us, "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly." Old-fashioned agonizing is almost a lost virtue.

You can never heal the need that you do not feel. Before anyone was touched and healed in Jesus' time, He had to be moved with compassion. It is so easy to live selfishly today and feel that you are all right all the time. When your sympathy loses its pang, you can no longer be a servant of Jesus' passion. Tearless hearts can never be heralds of the passion.

Luke 22:41-45 shows you that Jesus was in agony. This study is about filling up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ in your flesh. The verses read: "And he was withdrawn from them about a

stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. [He was getting hold of the real load of the world's sins and sorrows and sicknesses. God promised that He would not let you be tempted beyond that which you are able to bear, and the same was true with His Son. An angel appeared from Heaven to strengthen Him.] And being in an agony [that terrible stress of mind and of a broken heart] he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow."

Can you see two kinds of conditions there? When the heart is right, when the heart is reaching with a real burden, the burden of the hour will put you in the place of agonizing in prayer. However, when the heart is not really burdened, the weight of sorrow will put you to sleep. There are two ways that the physical man reacts. Christ had the real burden, and when it got heavy, it drove Him into deeper agony. However, the disciples did not have a real burden, and the weight on their physical being wore them out, and they went to sleep. They did not have the living Spirit of God within their hearts at that time.

People without the living Spirit of God or without an up-to-date experience yet do not enter into a real burden. They go to sleep. In the church services, when the going gets tough, the burden gets heavy, and the preacher is having a hard time, the burden will affect people in two ways. People who have a real burden will be praying for him (they will enter into it). As for the others, it affects the flesh the other way. They may say, "Oh, the sermon was dry today." The shape the heart is in has all to do in how the flesh reacts.

Real supplication leaves one tired and spent. It will do something to you physically when you get right into it.

Back to the Stones

There is another association between Paul and Christ that we need to consider. John 11:7-8 reads: "Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" In essence, what were the disciples saying? "Let us go anywhere but Judaea. We just came out of there, and they stoned us. Are you going to go right back where they stoned You?" Well, that is exactly where they went.

We are living in a day and time when it does not take many stones until people are on their way. However, the vital Spirit of God will cause you to want to be right where the battle is hottest. The disciples did not want to go back to Judaea and be stoned again; but Jesus said that He must go back, stones or no stones.

Was that Paul's attitude? Acts 14:19-20 tells us: "And there came thither [to Lystra] certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city: and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe."

Thank God for good disciples who will stand with the preacher. God has ordained that we encourage one another. Maybe he would have stood up anyway, but we do not know that. We just know what the Word says. The disciples gathered around him, and he stood up and went into the city. What do you think of that? He acted just as Jesus did, did he not? In essence, they said: "Paul, do not go back in there. There are a hundred other places

that you can preach where the people would appreciate you."

"I am going back into Lystra," Paul determined. The Spirit of God does not run as people run today. Let us face some facts—they are just fleshly works. If I would have listened to the flesh, I would have run many, many times since I have been in the ministry. I know what Paul meant about dying daily.

Verse 20 states that the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe. However, verse 21 reads, "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra. . . ." They went right back again. They held a meeting at Derbe and had good success. Paul's helpers said to him, "Where are we going next?"

Paul said, "I think that we ought to go back to Lystra."

What would take him back there? As sure as people fight, they see something. Paul remembered how he fought the church, and he saw precious souls behind that battle they were putting on. Thank God, he was true to hearts when the question was asked, "Where are we going to preach now, Paul?"

"We are going back to Lystra."

"Well, there won't be anything waiting for you but stones." Had they called a board together, they would have said: "Now, listen, this is not wise, wasting your body and your strength on people who do not appreciate you. Where are you going, Paul?"

"Back to the stones." Why did he go back to the stones? He needed to fill up that which was behind.

"Why, Paul, they about killed you the last time."

"I am still behind. I am going back to take some more."

The Holy Ghost sent him back, and some stones fell both ways. Paul laid the stones of judgment out, and men and women were moved to salvation. A congregation was raised up for God, right in the midst of the stones. Jesus went with His face set toward Jerusalem, and Paul with his face set toward Lystra.

Men and women are not going to be born into the Kingdom of God through a "campaign." They may kneel at an altar but be left short of a real, born-again experience. They will be brought to the birth but not delivered, because Zion must travail before children are born. They do not receive that real, living experience with God that delivers them from sin and makes new creatures out of them without a mother to travail through the spirit of suffering.

We can never know our Master as we ought to know Him until we kneel among the driving stones. Paul said that the only way that we can really know the power of His resurrection is to fellowship His sufferings.

For Your Consolation

God allotted a portion of suffering to each of us, first of all, for our good. He will not let you suffer for nothing. When you are brought to a place of suffering for the cause of God, it is going to be for your good and for somebody else's good, just the same as Jesus' suffering was.

Isaiah said that He saw the travail of His soul. When there has been true travail in the church, we see the birth of a soul. You cannot come under a true travail without a baby coming forth. God allotted a portion of suffering for each one of us for our good.

In 2 Timothy 2:12, Paul told Timothy, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us." Many deny Him by refusing the suffering. If you suffer with Him, you will reign with Him. The way to reign in a greater way with God is to go through some hard places. We know by the Bible what God will do, and we will put it to the test and go through the hard place. However, if you deny Him or refuse Him, He will deny you.

Second Corinthians 1:3-4 reads: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of

mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." You cannot help anyone else with something if you have not gone through something. It is just that simple.

The principle is the same on any line. A young man may buy a full kit of mechanic tools, build a new building, and put a sign out; but there may be many a day before he gets a job. Why? People want someone who has experience.

We who have had a tribulation and found the comfort know that it is there, because we went through it. The comfort is all in the Holy Ghost; but how are people going to know what the Holy Ghost will do? Only by your putting Him to the test and going through the suffering. It is then that they can know that there is One who can take them through every circumstance and situation.

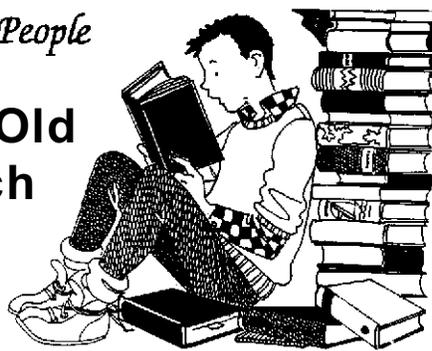
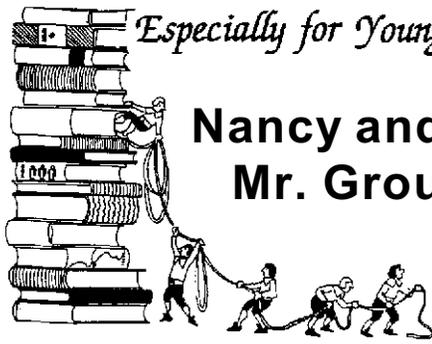
Verses 5-7 state: "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation." The consolation of Christ is geared according to the suffering. Not only does it do good for you, but you are helping someone else. It helps people to be saved.

The Scriptures that have the most to say about tribulation and loss also have the most to say about rejoicing. Paul lets us know in Romans 5:2-5 that we have glory in tribulation, because tribulation (suffering) works patience, patience works experience, and the experience brings the greater amount of the glory of God into your life.

I read one time of an old man who died as a martyr. In the flames

[continued on page 25]

Nancy and Old Mr. Grouch



Nancy skipped along until she got to old Mr. Banner's place. Then she slowed down as she went by. She started past his fence to the old, vine-covered house. Nancy was a bit afraid of old Mr. Banner. All the children were. If you ever leaned on his fence, he would come out swinging his cane and shouting: "Go away! What are you doing breaking my fence?"

Nancy shivered just a little as she looked at the bare windows, and then she hurried on. She was sorry for him. He never seemed very happy. The children called him "Old Mr. Grouch."

As soon as Nancy got home she asked her mother, "Is he really an old grouch?"

Her mother stopped drying dishes and studied a minute. "No, I don't think so. Nancy, dear, I think he is just terribly unhappy. You see, his wife died years ago, and he lives alone with nobody to love. He doesn't even know and love God like we do."

"I never saw him smile," Nancy shook her head. "Never!" Now she felt even more sorry for him. "Mother," looking up earnestly, "God can make him happy, can't He?"

"Yes, honey."

"Well," Nancy decided, "I'm going to ask God to come into his heart."

"I'm glad, dear," That was all her mother said.

So Nancy went into her little, blue and white bedroom. She knelt down with her face against her blue spread. "Dear Lord Jesus," she prayed, "please come into old Mr. Grouch—I mean old Mr. Banner's

heart. Please make him happy and please help him to smile again. Amen. Thank You, Jesus," she added.

While she was kneeling, a quiet voice said deep inside, "Would you be willing to tell him?"

Suddenly Nancy was afraid, "Oh, I couldn't," she said, "Somebody big can do it."

Yet her heart answered, "Would you, Nancy? You are big enough to help Jesus answer your prayer."

Then, because Nancy loved God very much, she told Him, "If You help me, I will—even if I am afraid."

When she went back into the kitchen her face had a shine on it. "I'm going to help God, Mother. I'm going to go to tell old Mr. Banner about Jesus."

"Now, Nancy?" her mother asked, surprised.

"Yes, right now, Maybe if I wait, I will be too scared."

"I'm glad you are going, dear," her mother smiled gently, "and God will go with you."

When Nancy got to Mr. Banner's fence, her knees began to get shaky. She stood there a minute and just stared at the big square house. "Help me to be brave," she whispered. Then she went in. As the gate clicked behind her she jumped. She almost wished she could turn and run. What if the old man shook his cane at her? Then what would she do? But she went anyway, up the walk, and knocked on the door.

When old Mr. Banner stood above her, she was trembling inside.

"Well," he growled down at her, "What do you want?"

"I—please, Mr. Banner. I want you to be happy."

"You what?" he shouted.

"I—want to tell you how to be happy."

"Hmp," he sputtered. Suddenly his face cracked in an unexpected grin. "Well," he muttered, "goodness knows I could do with a little happiness. Come in." He swung the door.

In the old, musty living room, with its high ceiling, Nancy sat on the edge of a straight chair. "Now," he growled at her, "What's this all about?"

So Nancy told Mr. Banner about Jesus' love and about praying for him. She told him, "When God lives in our hearts, He makes us happy."

Mr. Banner thumped his cane on the floor very hard. Then his eyes began to blink. He didn't look very mean to Nancy anymore. He just looked like a lonesome, old man. All of Nancy's fear was gone and she slid down from her chair.

She went over and laid her hand on his knee, "Would you like me to ask Jesus to come into your heart?" She looked into the thin, old face.

Mr. Banner laid a big wrinkled hand over her little smooth one and nodded. So Nancy prayed, "Dear Lord Jesus, please come into Mr. Banner's heart and make him happy, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

She looked up and saw a hot tear fall. His shoulders were shaking. Then he prayed too. "Dear God, forgive me and come into my heart. I need You, O God. Nobody knows how much, but You sent this little girl."

His tears were falling fast now. After a little while the old man lifted his head and smiled. His face was wet. He patted Nancy's hand, and she smiled back.

"Now you have two friends," she told him. "You have Jesus and you have me."

"Yes," he nodded, and his smile was glad. "Yes, yes." He kept nodding. "I have God and I have you." He held her hand tightly. "I am a very happy old man."

Selected

Isaiah 53:3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God,

and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his

own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

The Silence of Christ



Brother Joe Brewer

Christ Opened Not His Mouth

I want to point out that in verse 3, the prophet depicted our precious Lord Jesus by stating that "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we

esteemed him not." In my experience, I have found that this Man whom the Prophet Isaiah was depicting is still despised and rejected of men today. He is still saddened and acquainted with sorrow because souls are choosing death and hell instead of life and peace for all eternity.

Isaiah said in verse 7 of our Scripture text, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." When Christ was oppressed and afflicted, He opened not His mouth; He was

silent in all of that. Mere mortal words cannot describe the pain and the anguish that He endured. He suffered as a lamb brought to the slaughter, and He suffered in silence. Once it had been determined that Christ was going to be crucified, those who held Him captive spit in His face. I picture a holy hush falling on the angels that were standing ready on the portal of glory, waiting for the slightest cry for deliverance, but none came. He was silent; He never cried for deliverance.

Those who held Christ captive began to hit Him in the face with their fists and with the palms of their hands. As the blood began to seep from the wounds they had inflicted, they continued to slap His cheeks, grab hold of His beard, and rip it from His swollen face. In the process, they showed the utmost contempt for the Son of God. They demanded that He identify which one of the angry mob it was that smote Him. They hurled at Him vicious insults, taunts, and every indignation they could think of, yet Christ remained silent. The world would never tolerate such injustice, but our loving Savior never opened His mouth.

Jesus had it completely in His power not only to bring this world to a screeching halt but also to bring the whole universe to a screeching halt with one cry from His lips. However, He took no revenge because He was emboldened by God's divine grace to take such a punishment for our sins. Our loving Savior knew that He was destined for the Cross. There His silence accumulated into a glorious cry as the last breath began to leave His body, and the cry came forth, "It is finished." Glory to God!

The Cry of "It Is Finished"

This message is intended to depict the silence of Christ, but I want to digress and tell you what happens when the Lord speaks. Throughout the long, dark night, the Son of God was tortured and de-

graded. He was abused, beaten, mocked, and scorned. Finally, He was hung on a cruel Cross for the sins of humanity. The battle against sin had raged down through the annals of time and climaxed at this point in history. At the Cross, God's promise of a sacrifice for the sins of man was being realized. With His last breath of life a cry broke the agonizing silence when He cried out, "It is finished." Suddenly the Holy Spirit of God, in a swift but unseen stroke of His divine power, enabled Christ to transform that old rugged Cross into an anvil. He grabbed hold of those afflictions and pains and transformed them into a hammer, and He began to dash to pieces our sins and our transgressions with the cry of "It is finished."

Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He disannulled every accusation and trampled into chaff every indictment against us. With the sparks from the anvil of the Cross, Christ fashioned the shield and fragmented the arrows and the fiery darts whose tips were loaded with the deadly poison of our sins. They were aimed at us, but He quenched those darts and fragmented those arrows with the cry, "It is finished." When this cry of Christ broke the silence, at that point, Jesus emptied the whole arsenal of hell. He took from Satan that dreaded sword of death and hell, He snapped it over His knee, and cast it away in the fiery vengeance of God.

There is strength in the Lord. With one cry, He demoted the devil to nothing but chaff. The ground around the Cross and the empty grave nearby were littered with splinters and relics of hell's warfare. He quenched every fiery dart. He broke off the heads of the arrows of divine wrath and took the shafts of destruction and created a vessel of deliverance. Glory to His name!

If you disregard the convicting power of the Holy Spirit and die in your lost condition, you are going to stand before God, Who never has forgotten what happened to His Son

that day, and be judged with a fiery judgment. My friend, if you need to be saved, why not accept the opportunity? He will forgive you with mercy and save you today.

Having Faith in God

Let us return to our Scripture text. The Prophet Isaiah described the greatest preacher and teacher this world will ever know, and there we find Him silent. In His earthly ministry, Christ was never at a loss for words. He was never confused, and He was never asked a question that He could not answer. People who heard Him were astonished at His doctrine, but in the time of His affliction and oppression, He was silent. Silence does not always denote depression, desperation, or despondency. By carefully studying, you will find that in His times of silence, Christ was sending out some of the most powerful messages of His entire ministry.

Proverbs 17:28 reads, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." Jesus taught many lessons by being silent. There is a lesson to be learned when the God of Heaven is silent.

The first time we read of Jesus being silent is in Matthew 15:21-28: "Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

"But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs

eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Do not give up, saint of God, just because Christ is being a little silent.

This woman of Canaan was a Gentile and a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. She was approaching Christ with an urgent request because her daughter was grievously tormented with a devil. Her request was not just idle words; it came from a mother's lips that were connected to a broken heart. She wanted help that only the Lord could give. She was desperate for help. She cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil."

This cry acknowledged Christ through His royal, earthly lineage and showed that she recognized Him as the Messiah, the great King of kings and Lord of lords. She knew that this kind and loving Jesus had the power but to speak the word and her daughter would be relieved from the torments of this devil that had enslaved her. However, this Christ of great mercy and compassion "answered her not a word." The disciples began to entreat the Lord, "Send her away; for she crieth after us."

Christ spoke to His disciples and let them know that He had been sent by His Father to the lost sheep of Israel. No doubt, this mother heard that reply, but He was not speaking to her. In her desperation, she tried again to get the attention of the Lord. She came and worshipped Him. No doubt, she fell at His feet. She probably lifted her head and the Lord Jesus Christ could see the tears falling from her cheeks and the pain etched in her face. She said, "Lord, help me." I am talking about a loving God who is moved with tender compassion for His people.

The Master Shepherd heard this plea that came as a cry from a ser-

vant to her Master. Her words seemed to fall on deaf ears. Instead of Christ reaching out to meet the need of this despondent mother, His answer cut her heart like a knife when He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Sometimes Jesus Christ will speak hard sayings, but we need not be offended.

A Humble Heart and a Contrite Spirit

In my mind I can picture this mother being in the multitude that heard Jesus explaining to the disciples of John concerning His divinity. Matthew 11:3-6 reads: "And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me."

Sometimes Jesus can speak some hard truths, but blessed are they who are not offended in Him. Jesus gave a reply that enabled John's disciples to answer their own question. Isn't that wonderful? Jesus is all wise. He knows what He is doing, and when He is silent, He still knows exactly what He is doing. He knows the very moment, down to the second, to answer your cry.

Jesus noted that He had demonstrated His powers by allowing the blind to receive their sight and all these wondrous miracles, but to this mother's plea, He had no answer. He specifically told her that she was a dog. This reminds me of an old country boy that was in the same shape one time, nothing but a dog. I am glad I took the hard sayings. I had to see myself as I really was. I thank the Lord for being so faithful to me.

Jesus told her that He could not give the children's bread to the dogs.

This mother was not offended, but she acknowledged the truth. There is the key, my friend. She acknowledged the truth that she, being a Canaanite, a Gentile, was not worthy of the bread of the children of Israel. In Matthew 15:27 she said, "Truth, Lord [but thank God she did not stop there]: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

In the next verse we read, "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." What made the difference? Christ spoke not a word when this mother spoke to Him recognizing His kingship, nor did He speak a word when she made a plea for help as a servant. Jesus did not speak a word when this mother recognized that He did not owe her anything. Too many times we think He owes us something, but He owes us nothing. His word on the Cross was sufficient, and that was more than we deserved. This woman approached Christ as a lowly sinner with a humble heart and a contrite spirit, and Christ wrought the miracle that she desired.

Do you know why some people do not get the goods when they seek Him? They are missing the miracle. Why are they missing the miracle? They do not have a contrite spirit and a humble heart. You must have those elements, my friend, to be born again by the grace of God. She was not offended by the strong words of Christ, but when she pleaded for the crumbs that fell from the Master's table, her humility touched the Savior's heart; her plea was granted when He saw that humility.

This mother realized that the crumbs of bread contained the same ingredients found in the whole loaf. All she needed to do was to get a few crumbs, and she would have the ingredients that she needed. The ingredients that make up the bread for the Master's table are love, mercy, grace, and compassion,

blended together with forgiveness. They are saturated with the Word and the Spirit of God, and then they are placed in the oven of patience by a loving God. God's desire is to find the faithful ministry to tend the oven, and when ready, remove the bread of life and present it fresh and warm to a lost and dying world. The bread of life never grows stale; it is always fresh. In the bread of life are the ingredients that will help souls.

Thinking about this bread in the oven, I recalled that Harry Truman once said, "If you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen." Do you know what God would probably say to us? "If you can't take some heat, get out of the kitchen." Sometimes we have to take a little heat. Too many people have turned the oven off or the heat is not high enough. Without the fiery judgments of God, there is not enough heat to bake the bread. Some people only want to hear about the love of God. What about the judgments of the loving God? Judgment is what puts the heat in it, and heat is what finishes the bread.

In our Scripture lesson, by remaining silent, Christ preached a powerful message on humility. Oh, how we need it! James 4:6 reads, "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." Verse 10 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." Humility helps to keep you from being deceived by the devil. If a person is not humble, he will start twisting the Scriptures. He will put circumstances in a different light. He knows how to spin things so that you come to a certain conclusion instead of using God's Word and God's Spirit.

If you will wait on God to speak to you, God will make things crystal clear. That small voice will say: "Here is what I am trying to get to you. You need to get your eyes in the right place; get your ears opened, and I will give you what you need." Jesus said in Revelation 3:18, "Anoint thine eyes with

eyesalve, that thou mayest see." He said in verse 17 they were "increased with goods, and have need of nothing." We must have humility or Jesus Christ will become silent.

Silence That Brought Condemnation

The next time you read of Christ preaching a message by remaining silent is found in John 8:1-6: "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not."

In those verses of Scripture we find that the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman to the temple where Jesus was teaching. They charged her with the sin of adultery, and they said they caught her in the very act. It makes me wonder why they were spying on the sinful habits of the city. Was it just to find those guilty of certain sins so they could charge them and put them to death? It was noted by some historians that the sin of adultery was exceedingly common during that era of time. They no longer enforced the law, nor did they use the waters of jealousy because the husbands were just as guilty as the wives were.

Verse 6 gives us the answer: "This they said, tempting him." It is a foolish thing to tempt the Lord. They were tempting Him so that they might accuse Him. They were not so much after the life of the woman as they were His life. They wanted to accuse Him of either violating the law of God or violating

the laws of Roman society, which did not condemn the adulterer to death. They acted as though they were interested in the truth that Moses presented to the children of Israel. They acted as if they wanted righteousness and truth to prevail.

Jesus knew their true intentions; therefore, He stooped down and began to write in the sand. What a wise Savior! He kept silent, and in His silence, He delivered a powerful message against their hypocrisy. These scribes and Pharisees were big hypocrites, and Jesus did not think they deserved an answer. Jesus knew they were attempting to back Him into a corner. Well, my friend, let me declare to you that there is not a corner big enough to put the Creator of the world in. He created the world and everything in it. How could anyone think they could back Him into a corner? No, sir! It is not going to happen!

Jesus was a man, but He was God as well. The scribes and the Pharisees did not know it, but the same finger that was writing on the ground was the same finger attached to the hand that created man from the dust of the ground. The same finger that was writing on the ground was the same finger that wrote the Law for Moses on the tables of stone.

The scribes and the Pharisees thought they were going to outwit Jesus. There is much speculation about what the Lord wrote on the ground that day. Perhaps the Lord wrote Deuteronomy 22:22, which states, "If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." The Law commanded both the man and the woman be brought before the people of Israel and be put to death. This Scripture does not say a thing about stoning, but that was their method. They liked that method because they got to be the judge of life and death.

Perhaps the next inscription that

Jesus wrote on the ground was the initials of the man who had been with the woman. In John 8:7 we read, "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." After making this statement, Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground again. Perhaps this time He began to denote more of the sacred Scriptures that denounced the sins of humanity. Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Whatever He wrote, His statement cut the accusers to the heart, and they were convicted by their own consciences. They began to excuse themselves one by one, beginning at the eldest, until finally Jesus was left alone with the woman.

John 8:10-11 reads: "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." The only One in the crowd who was able to cast a stone did not condemn her. He was the only One without sin.

The danger needs to be noted. If you do not walk with a humble heart, you will become hypocritical and harsh, and bitterness will take root in your heart, and many will be defiled. That was the case with the scribes and the Pharisees and various other members of the Sanhedrin. In their hypocrisy, they showed a brutal spirit, a spirit that revolted and caused the Master Shepherd to move against their hypocrisy.

Rejecting the Truth

Jesus knew that many times it is the vilest of sinners that offer the greatest accusations. Many times they want to paint others black with sin so they look pure. The scribes and the Pharisees found one of the most painful things that they could

have was a guilty conscience. That is exactly what hypocrisy will give you, unless your conscience gets seared with a hot iron. If it gets seared with a hot iron, you are in more trouble than you realize. If you keep overriding the voice of God, you need humility.

The people whom Jesus was addressing were not void of truth. They had known the truth, but because they were not willing to obey it, they had deceived themselves. Jesus, in His silence, was teaching powerful messages to try to help people not to be deceived. The devil can deceive you, and you can deceive yourself by not doing what you know to do.

James 1:21-22 says: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." Sometimes people are their own worst enemy. A brother may get up and preach, but someone may say, "He can't touch me." He is not trying to touch you. He is trying to help you to see what God wants you to do so that God can touch you.

Luke 23:6-9 reads: "When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilaean. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing."

This is the third place where Jesus preached a message without even uttering a word. We find in these verses of Scripture that Herod was depicted as being exceedingly glad to see Jesus. He thought that the Lord might perform a miracle for him as a kind of side show in order for him to release Him. Jesus

was not going to perform a side show for anyone. He is not in the circus; He is in the saving business.

The Scriptures note that Herod questioned Jesus with many words, but Jesus answered him nothing. As it turned out, it was not Herod who was judging Jesus, but Jesus, in His silence, was judging Herod. His silence was preaching a message to this great and powerful king. This great king was getting a message from the Lord Jesus Christ that his case was hopeless. Herod had built up that tabernacle in a mighty way, and he had done wonderful works, but his case was hopeless. How do we know that? Herod laid hold of John the Baptist, bound him, and put him in prison. Finally, Herod had John beheaded because of the Truth that he preached and stood for.

Overriding the Spirit of God

As I mentioned earlier, adultery was rampant in the Roman society, and John had reproved King Herod for having his brother Philip's wife. The king as well as the peasants were involved in adulterous relationships. Jesus stood before Herod without saying a word. When Nicodemus went to see Jesus, Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:7, "Ye must be born again." Then He said in verse 16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," but to Herod, He did not say a thing. Jesus told the woman at the well about the Living Water springing up into everlasting life, but to Herod He said nothing.

John the Baptist had preached to Herod, but Herod turned down the Gospel, and that left him in a hopeless condition. Friend, it is dangerous to turn down the Truth from God's Word. Your case can be like Herod's if you are not careful.

When you hear the Word of God, you need to develop a love for the Truth. If you do not develop a love for the Truth, you will be

deceived. In 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12 the Apostle Paul wrote about those who received not a love for the Truth. He said in verses 11-13: "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Friend, if you override the Spirit of God and push the Word of God back, God has nothing else to reach you with. If you, like Herod, do not show love and respect for the Truth, God will quit speaking to you just as He did Herod.

It is important to notice the progression of this message on the silence of Christ. Without humility hypocrisy will take hold in your heart and you will become hopeless. If you stay hypocritical long enough, your case will be hopeless before the great God of Heaven. Some people do not think that God will give up on them, but He has gone on record

in the Holy Scriptures to substantiate this fact. In 2 Chronicles 30:7 he said, "And be not ye like your fathers, and like your brethren, which trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation, as ye see."

Psalm 81:12 states, "So I gave them up [God was speaking] unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels." Have you ever seen people like this? Such people are hopeless. Acts 7:42 reads, "Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven." Romans 1:24 states, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." God will give some people up. Romans 1:26 says, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature."

It is important that you make the most of every opportunity that you have to make things right with God. If you are lost and you feel the Holy Spirit knocking on your heart's door, there is still hope for you. If you can feel the convicting power of God down in your heart, God has not given up on you. He is a long-suffering God, and He is a God of great mercy and tender compassion. Please do not override the Spirit of God. This may be your last opportunity. You have no guarantee of tomorrow, and if God gives up on you because of your resisting Him, you will be in a hopeless condition; then man can no longer help you, and God will no longer speak to you. If you are convicted in your heart of anything, do not push God off. You need to repent.

(Compact Disc TR-1005M)

Perilous Times

These are perilous times. The hearts of men are failing them for fear of what is coming on the earth. From a human standpoint, the future outlook is very dark and threatening. The forces of evil are tremendous. Atheism is spreading her black wings over the earth. Catholicism and Communism are reaching for the reins of all governments, and countless millions of people are under their influence. Drunkenness, debauchery, adultery, and sins of every kind are riding high or slyly creeping into the hearts, homes, and lives of millions of our people in America and all over the world. Many churches are spiritually dead. They are conformed to modernism, forms of godliness, but they deny the power thereof. We are told from such turn away.

Realizing that the coming of the Lord draws nigh and that we are now in the late evening of earthly time and experiencing conditions like those in the days of Noah, which Jesus tells us would come upon the earth again and would exist at the time of His coming, let us look up. The uplook is much better and brighter than the outlook. Our only hope for survival and everlasting life is in Jesus. Read the Bible often and keep in a spirit of prayer and a state of grace.

Jesus told Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for thee." We may take this as a promise as we live for our blessed Lord, pray much, do His will, and keep true and faithful. Mark 13:13 states, "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the

same shall be saved." These are days when great patience and endurance are vitally and necessarily important. It indeed takes much enduring grace now and will require more and more in the future.

Reader, you need to wake up. Do not take things for granted and sleep until it is too late to make peace with God. Be robed and ready for the coming of our blessed Lord. Come while He is saying, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Do not wait until He will have to say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41). Come while you may. "To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart" (Psalm 95:7-8).

Selected

KEEP THE FAITH

Is Your Life in Alignment With God's Word?



Brother Irwin Seshier

Living to Please God

We know that today many people are living lives that are completely opposite of how the Word of God directs them to live. Things that they once aligned with the Word of God they now deem unnecessary. People think they do not have to live according to the Word in order to be God's child. They no longer see the wrong of what they are doing. They think they can go wherever they want to go, wear anything they want to wear, and say whatever they want to say and get by. In the back of their minds, they think, "The Lord sees my heart, so I can ask forgiveness and He will excuse my actions." Dear one, when you get to that point in your thinking, you are walking on treacherous ground.

The Lord does see your heart, and if your heart is right, you are going to do everything you can to do the right thing. You are going to live your life as a child of God ought to live. You should not want to live on the edge. You will not live to do just as little as you can to get by. That is not the prayer or the desire of a child of God. A child of God wants to do everything in his or her power, by the help of the Lord, to live a life free from condemnation, sin, or anything that would be questionable.

People are watching your life. Many people do not pick up the Word of God and read it, but they are watching your life. They know whether or not you are a true child of God, and they know where you go to the house of God; they know

by your conduct and your conversations. Why would you not want to live a life that is pleasing, not only to God but also to the people around you? You need to adjust your life to what the Spirit of God directs you to do. You have only a very short time on this earth.

James 4:14-15 says: "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." We are living in a time when many people have no thought of God in their lives. They do what they want to do, they go where they want to go, and they say what they should not really be saying in their conversations, yet they still want God in

their lives. Friend, you are going to have to realize that in order to walk with God, you have to clean up your life. You must have your heart cleansed if you want to please God.

How to Stay Strong for God

Is your life in alignment with the Word of God? No doubt, you have an automobile, and when it gets out of alignment, you know that it needs some attention. Not only can your car or truck get out of alignment but also your life can get out of alignment in your walk with God. Driving a car can become more expensive and more dangerous the longer you allow that vehicle to be out of alignment. A lot of other problems can be traced back to poor alignment. There are things that you can do to prevent other things from going wrong.

Failing to live a life in alignment with the Word of God can also become dangerous and expensive spiritually. Living a life that is displeasing to God can become dangerous for your soul. I am thankful that God saved my soul one day and plucked me from the pit of sin that I was in. The habits of life are expensive and dangerous. Young person, listen to me very carefully. If you get involved in the things of this old world and pick up bad habits and other ungodly things, those things will take control of your life. No matter how strong you think you are, when you get around worldly peers, you will be tempted to do the wrong thing. Being around them too long or too much can cause your downfall.

Parents sometimes say, "I know my son or my daughter would not do those ungodly things." I have seen what some young people do when they get around others of their own age. They can be lured to do things that they normally would not do. That is the reason Christian young people should be involved with other Christian young people. Some of you might not agree with that and say, "We need to get in-

involved with worldly people around us so that we can win them to the Lord." I know how much fun young people can have. You really cannot have the kind of fun that you need to have if you are not around other Christian young people.

If you fail to align your life with God's Word, you will start to deviate from the strait and narrow path. Saint of God, you are living in a world that is trying to draw you away from God. It is trying to draw you back to the areas of life in which you were at one time. If not for the power and the strength of God, you could be easily drawn back.

It is so easy to be drawn back, and if you go back to the place where you left when you got saved, the world and its pleasures will become more alluring than before. When you are not aligned with the Word of God, you will be aligned with something else. When your life is out of alignment with the will of God, the desire to do the things of God will not be high on your priority list. If you are going to be successful with God, He has to be at the apex of your life. He has to be at the top of your priority list.

Too many people have gotten out of alignment with God, yet they still think they are successful with God. Friend, you must realize that the devil wants to pull you away from Truth, to pull you away from godly principles, and to destroy your love for the saints. The devil wants you to get your eyes on other people. He wants you to become discouraged so that you will doubt your experience. The devil never wants you to look at strong people who are pillars in the church. He wants you to look at the ones who are weak and struggling and not doing well in their souls.

Setting Godly Priorities

When your alignment with the Word of God and the Spirit of God is not where it needs to be, things will enter your life that are not godly priorities. You will feel that

you do not have to pray much or read your Bible or be faithful to the house of God anymore. You are never going to stay strong for God if you stay out of the worship services. Too many people just stay out because they are lazy. You need to have a desire to be in the church services. You have to get yourself up and get dressed and go to the house of God.

How long would you have a job with a lazy attitude? How long would your employer put up with you if you went to work only when you wanted to work? You would find a pink slip in your mailbox. If you claim to be a child of God, your responsibility is to be in church if possible. It takes effort to be a child of God. We live in a world where many people want to have things handed to them. It seems that everyone wants a handout. I believe in helping people, but I believe many times people need to get up and start helping themselves.

Friend, when you miss the church services unnecessarily, your life is going to get out of alignment. You must walk as He wants you to walk to be successful in this Christian race. It is not what you want that is important, but it is what God wants. If you do not do what God wants you to do, you will drift into spiritual darkness. There is a danger in drifting. When a person is drifting, many times he may not sense that he is drifting until he has gone far away. The Lord could just let you go on in darkness.

John 8:12 says, "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." I enjoy being around people who have the victory and who have a smile on their face. When you have salvation, there is something about your countenance that is radiant. You want to praise the Lord. He wants you. He bought you with His redeeming love. He puts joy in your heart and a song on your lips.

This all deals with alignment

with God's Word. Statistics prove that when a vehicle is out of alignment, it decreases the gas mileage. On the spiritual side, when you are not aligned with the Word of God, you will lose your desire to press forward. Your desire to serve the Lord will start to decrease, and you will begin to feel that spiritual things are not that important. You must press on! Philippians 3:14 says, "I press toward the mark for the prize [there is a prize awaiting those who press] of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Being an Example to Others

When a car needs an alignment, it is not long until the tires need to be replaced. Also, when your vehicle needs alignment, it adds stress to other vehicle components, including the steering equipment. Is not this amazing how this relates to the spiritual side of men and women? If you are not in alignment with the things of God, others who are watching your life may think that what you are doing is right. You are supposed to be an example to others.

People in the congregation watch what you do. If some people feel that you are doing the right thing, but really you are doing the wrong thing, they may start doing what you are doing and think it is right when it is wrong. That is the reason you need to keep your garments pure and your conversation to the point and clean.

You should not let your actions be a hindrance to other people. The enemy will use them to his full potential to discourage others. We live in an age of discouragement. You will have times of discouragement, but you have God to help you in those discouraging times.

A car that is out of alignment can pull to one side or the other, which could result in a fatal situation. When your life is not in alignment with God, you are going either to the left or to the right, and you could be in a fatal spiritual situation. The enemy wants you to be in a fatal

spiritual condition. The enemy of your soul will put things in your pathway to hinder your walk with God. The devil is good at putting hindrances and obstacles before you. He is good at putting spiritual potholes out there. Those potholes can be damaging.

Many times it is not just one pothole that gets you out of alignment, but it is when you repeatedly go into potholes. You need to have the mind of Christ. Your life can be swayed by the enemy, and he is not going to steer you to the strait and narrow way. He is going to get you out on the rough and rocky road, thinking that you are on a smooth highway. He will cause you to believe the road is fine when, in reality, it is not fine. Why? You have strayed from the strait and narrow highway.

In the book entitled *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pilgrim and Christian thought the other highway was the best way to go, but it was rocky. It was rough, and when they went that way, they got themselves in trouble. They got off the road that God had laid out for them. Saint of God, do not get off the strait and narrow way. You should want to be right where God wants you to be.

God wants you to grow up spiritually. Some people think they are growing up, but they are only getting older. Spiritual growth is not automatic. You must want to grow in the things of God. You must want God more than anything. I love the song that says, "I want more of Jesus and less of me." Not only should you want to grow, but you should be persistent in growing. Someone once wrote, "Without God life has no purpose, without purpose life has no meaning, and without meaning life has no significance or hope."

The enemy wants you to think there is no hope for your life. Sometimes people feel there is no hope and think they might as well end it all. Friend, if you were to do that, the enemy would succeed in destroying your life. There is hope in Jesus Christ. If you do not have Jesus

Christ in your life, you are in a hopeless situation. In the Bible many people expressed hopelessness. Job experienced hopelessness. Job 7:5-6 says: "My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope." Job got to that point, but he knew exactly to Whom his life aligned. Remember, you need hope to cope. The Lord will sometimes place you in a state of weakness.

If you ever feel hopeless, hold on. If you ever feel like giving up, hold on. If you ever feel that nobody cares for you, hold on. If you give up and give in, that is a sure way of getting your life out of alignment with God. Sometimes you need to be content with your weakness. Second Corinthians 12:9 reads, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." I am sure you would rather be free from your weaknesses than to be content with them, but contentment is an expression of faith in the goodness of God. Oftentimes weaknesses will keep you humble. They keep people from thinking too highly of themselves.

What Is Your Hangup?

Another individual in the Bible whose life was in alignment with God's Word was Gideon. Gideon had to have his life in complete alignment with God's Word. Gideon recruited an army of thirty-two thousand men to fight the Midianites. However, God trimmed it down to only three hundred men. Do you know what those odds were? They were four hundred fifty to one. That was not good odds. If you were Gideon, what would you have thought? Gideon had three hundred men to fight against an army of one hundred thirty-two thousand, but consider Who was in control.

Right when you think there is no way out, Who is in control? You may think there is no way that you can be healed of an affliction, but Who is in control? How can you get your life in alignment when seemingly no one else cares? Who is in control? God is in control. You see, the Lord wanted to prove to the Israelites that it was His power and not their own strength that saved them. If you get to the point that it is not you but it is to the glory of God, more things can and will be taken care of in your life. Gideon's life had to be in alignment with the Spirit of God. In order to have that complete alignment, he had to be close to God to receive specific instructions.

How do you think Gideon felt? Do you think Gideon might have felt some uncertainty? Sometimes the Lord may want you to whittle down things. Perhaps you have become too occupied with materialism. You can get so taken up with worldly things that when the Lord comes and tells you that you need to get rid of something, you start to rise against what God wants you to do. Then what will happen to your alignment with God? You see, that is the human part of us. Sometimes you may feel that you need this or that, but God knows it could be a hindrance to your spiritual growth. We read in 1 John 5:4, "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the

world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Is your life aligned to the Spirit of God? Is it aligned to the Word of God? Is your life aligned to the Bible standard of the Church of God? You may want to dress any way you want to dress, but your life will be out of alignment with the Lord. You may go places where you want to go, but you are getting yourself out of alignment with the Spirit of God. If you do that, you cannot blame God down the road when things go wrong. Will you put God first in your life?

Are too many things interfering with God's will in your life that it has become very difficult for God to get your attention? You do not want to get into that position. Nothing is worth going to hell for.

Luke 18:18-25 reads: "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

"Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest

thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, [Jesus knew this was the young man's hangup. What is your hangup? Why will you not get your life back in alignment with God?] and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

What is the one thing that you are holding onto that is preventing you from aligning to the teachings of God? There is nothing more precious than Jesus Christ. If you do not have Jesus Christ in your life, you have nothing. If you live and die lost, you have lived your life in vain. Sinner friend, you need to take heed to the message. Why do you continue to live your life the way you want to live it? The best thing that you could ever do is to get your life aligned with the Spirit of God. You need to take your desires away from yourself and focus on the true need that you have in your soul.

(Compact Disc TR-1109)

Our Conduct Will Be Judged

Jesus said that His Word would judge us at the last day. Of our conduct as Christians, Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:21-22: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Christians must live like Christians, walk like Christians, obey like Christians, love like Christians, forgive like Christians, and be generous with the generosity of Christ. They must imitate the master in all things. They must not love the world, neither the things that are in the world.

[*Fellowship of His . . . contin. from p. 13*]

he looked to those people and he said, "You have been looking for a miracle for years. Take a look at me." He was standing right in the flames. It was cooking his flesh, but he said, "I am as easy as if I were lying on a bed of down. You talk about a bed of roses; I am in it." He had the consolation of Christ, and he kept on singing until his voice became so cooked from the fire that he could not form any words. A miracle that the world needs to see is someone who can bear the same suffering that Christ bore, and do it in the same manner that the martyr did and not be affected by the heat, but rejoice in the consolation that comes while the suffering is going on.

Your sufferings are not only for your good but also for the good of the church. Notice verse 24 of the Scripture text again: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." Suffering was not only doing Paul good but also doing the church good.

Suffering confirms the faith of new converts. Heaven has the only record that I know of for those who started on the way and who had a very good hold, but they got their eyes on some older professed Christian who could not take the pressure and acted ugly. That was all the devil needed to discourage a soul. Certainly, you are to keep your eyes on Jesus, but if you profess an experience of Christ, people are going to watch you. Being true and taking suffering will confirm the faith of a convert.

The More They Suffered, The More They Multiplied

Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. Why do you look at and get such an uplift and strength from Job, Daniel, the Hebrew boys, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Paul, and Peter? They suffered, and through the Holy Spirit, they stood

true. I know that God puts a new heart in a new convert, but when I speak of a great heart, I mean an enlarged heart, a heart that is great in the Kingdom of God. How is it made? It is created by going through circumstances and problems and trials. We like to be around aged people who have been true, who have showed the right spirit, and who have been faithful. We like to talk to them. They are an inspiration. Why? Because they have great hearts. They have great hearts as they have gone through hard places. They have suffered the sufferings of Christ. The same sacrificial spirit that brought Jesus through brought them through.

The spade of trouble digs deeper into the reservoir of comfort and makes more room for the water of consolation. Someone may think that kind of suffering will wipe out the church; however, it never has. Consider a type. The more the Egyptians afflicted the Hebrews, the more they multiplied. Their labor was hard, and they counted it a privilege to get home and be with their companions. That closeness with their companions kept children coming right along, and that nation multiplied to the degree that it frightened Pharaoh.

The Bible says that the more they suffered, the more they multiplied; and the same thing is true with you and me. Real suffering hitting the church will draw you close to God and close to one another. You will forget the little fanatical things that you think you cannot overlook.

You will get to the place where you really feel love in your heart. Be honest about it. John said to love not in words. The word *love* hits deep. Love will cause the church to progress.

The more the Egyptians afflicted the Hebrews, the more the Hebrews multiplied. There is a truth that shines forth: the devil's way of extinguishing goodness is God's way of advancing it. The devil does not want you to suffer in the manner

that I am preaching about, because that is God's way of advancing the kingdom. Carnal pride, pomp, and show are not going to advance the kingdom.

Sometimes we may face this: If I make this move, the church is going to be hurt; but if I make the other move, I am going to be hurt. We should make the decision quickly, "Lord, I will take the hurt. Don't let the church suffer."

Are you in the succession of suffering? Are you filling up that which is behind in the sufferings of Christ? They are doing it in China. They are doing it in Russia. Little handfuls gather together, hid away in basements, in ships, or in woods. All the time they are gathered together, they cannot sit freely. They live every moment waiting for the crowd to come in with clubs and bring death on them, but they love God's kingdom and God's cause. Therefore, God's cause is furthered in Russia, and the Russians cannot stop it. Devils cannot stop it when God's people get where He wants them to be.

Are you filling up that which is behind in your sufferings for Christ? A missionary once suffered untold agony and faced death many times. After long years of hardship and difficulty, these were his last words before he died: "Recall those years again. Give me back all the experience. Give me the shipwrecks. Give me the standing in the face of death. Allow me to stand again surrounded with spears and clubs. Give me the spears in my side and the clubs on my head, knocking me to the ground. Give it back to me! God, if you will give me life, I will be their missionary that many years again." That is the Spirit of God.

Here is a poet's expression that I want to leave with you: "A noble army, men and boys, The matron and the maids, Around the Savior's throne rejoice in robes of light arrayed. They climbed the steep ascent of heaven through peril, toil, and pain. O God, to us may grace be given to follow in their train."

Victorious Faith

1 John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

If we are overcome, it is because we have not fully received the vision of the Christ who has all power in Heaven and in earth—the power that is ours to use against the enemy of the children of God. In 2 Kings, Chapter 6, we are told that the Syrian army that was about to make war on the Israelite army came by night with their vast throng and surrounded the Israelites. When one of God's servants arose in the morning, he saw this vast host, and he said to the prophet of God, "How shall we do?" This young man's vision was dimmed. He thought that the whole responsibility of taking care of the Syrian army rested on him or on mankind. He was not physically blind, but he was spiritually blind.

The old prophet called on God to open the eyes of this young man, and this is what happened: "And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings 16:17). There was that heavenly host ready to fight the battle for God's children; they did fight the battle and the enemy was defeated. We must have the vision of the fact that the battle is not ours, but God's. Victorious faith will cause God's children to claim victory before they enter into the fight, as nothing can stand before our God.

The Word of God tells us of some persons who had the vision of what God wanted to be to them and who has this victorious faith. First, there was Jonathan, the man of God whose experience is recorded in 1 Samuel, Chapter 14. The vast army of the Philistines was encamped against the

Israelites. Jonathan took his armor-bearer and together they went "over the top" for the Lord. This is what Jonathan said: "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few" (verse 6). Jonathan's vision was not that he and the armor-bearer could rout the enemy in their own strength, but God would fight the battle for them. Why? Jonathan knew that the battle was won before he started, because of victorious faith in his God. He also knew that God never fails, and that there is no restraint to the Lord to save by the many or the few.

Again, we call your attention to the three Hebrew children, whose experience is recorded in Daniel 3:17, "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king." These three Hebrew children were taken captive by the enemy who was trying to make them worship their heathen gods, but the Hebrew children knew too much about the true God to yield to the king's demand. He threatened to have them cast into the fiery furnace, which was not to be heated in the regular way, but seven times hotter than usual. The Hebrew children had this victorious faith, and they just told the king that they were serving a God who would deliver them out of the fiery furnace; and not only would He do that, but He would deliver them out of the king's hands also. The Hebrew children were put to the test by being cast into the fiery furnace. I can see their enemies, after a time, look into the fiery furnace, which they supposed would consume these three faithful followers of the true God at once with its terrific heat, but to their surprise there

they were walking around, and their clothes were not even scorched. Best of all, a fourth, like to the Son of God, was walking in the furnace with them. They did not go into the furnace alone; Jesus went with them, not to keep them in the furnace for a lesson, but to deliver them out of it, as the Hebrew children had said He would do.

What victorious faith! Victorious faith will claim the victory in advance and will begin to praise God for the same. Caleb and Joshua had this victorious faith. They were among the twelve spies that went to spy out Canaan. Ten of their number returned with discouraging reports. The reason for the discouraging reports was that the ten looked at the strong men and at the obstacles. "But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we. And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight" (Numbers 13:31-33). Joshua and Caleb saw the same land that the other ten spies saw, but their report was different: they saw the sons of Anak, the giants, and the walled cities; they saw the Amalekites and the Hittites. However, they also saw the land with milk and honey, and they saw the great bunches of grapes. After telling about all the conditions they had seen in Canaan, Caleb stilled the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (verse 30). Caleb saw the giants, but his victorious faith did not show him just the obstacles; it helped him to see how to overcome the obstacles and to take the land. Caleb was serving a God who would take care of the giants.

Many people are looking for rea-

sons why they will not be healed rather than why they should possess the land or possess their healing. They get their eyes on the giant disease, and therefore bring back a discouraging report. Victorious faith looks up to God and declares: "We can take the land because the God of heaven is behind our claims. If God be for us, who can be against us? Faith looks up and is encouraged to claim the healing; unbelief looks around at giants and obstacles and becomes discouraged. What you see depends on where you look. No person who has always looked up and who has kept his eyes on Jesus has ever become discouraged. There is no discouragement from that direction. Discouragement comes from looking at the reason why it cannot be done instead of the reason why it can be done. The reason why it can be done is that we are serving a victorious Christ who is behind all of our claims against the enemy. Child of God, have you that victorious faith against disease? If you have, you will have the devil and all of his diseases on the run.

David is another one who had that victorious faith. First Samuel 17:37 reads, "David said moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said unto David, Go, and the

LORD be with thee."

David could have sat down with a long face and with a look of discouragement that would have cast an influence of defeat on all in his presence. He could have said: "Now, Lord, you see such an enormous army the Philistines have. Lord, it seems that I can hardly endure this awful test," and he would have been defeated. Why? Because his vision would have been of the power of the enemy instead of the power of God. He would have been making the dear Lord listen to his praising the enemy instead of making the enemy listen to his praising the Lord.

Again, when the Philistines were about to make an attack on the Israelites and the Philistine giant, Goliath, was standing out in front of the army, and as the Israelites were looking upon his stature and trembling with fear, David, God's little man, put in his appearance. He saw the same giant of the Philistine army that the others had seen, but he also saw a greater giant, one whom he was serving, up in Heaven, One who had all power and who could take care of all the human giants that man could present. David could not understand how any man, regardless of his stature, could defy the army of the living God. I can see David as he took his sling and picked up five stones from the brook, but here just a little of the human crept in, for David did not

need five stones; he needed just one, with the power of God behind it, and God's hand to guide the stone.

When David let loose of the sling, the stone pierced the forehead of Goliath and slew him. Faith in God was what really slew the giant—that victorious faith that always wins the battle. David did not even have one thought that the Israelites were going to be defeated. No, the God whom David was serving never lost a battle as far as he was concerned. It is only when man gets in God's way with his unbelief that God's purpose for His children is defeated.

An angel appeared to the Apostle Paul and said, "Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee" (Acts 27:24). Paul then encouraged his companions with these words: "Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25). Paul believed his God and counted the blessing that God had promised him with His victorious faith so that he could encourage his people.

This victorious faith is for all; but it can be obtained only by keeping our eyes on the Lord and by having the vision of the all-power of heaven and earth fighting the battle for His children.

O. L. Yerty

Meeting Announcements

MT. PLEASANT, PA

April 19

FELLOWSHIP MEETING: Church of God, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania 15666
Service time: 10:30 a.m. A meal will be served by the local congregation. Lodging: *Holiday Inn Express*, 724-547-2095 (This is on the same road as the church. Please mention that you are there for the church meeting for a discount.); *Super 8 Motel* in New Stanton, 724-925-8915, on I-70W, (10 miles north of the church); *Melody Motor Lodge*, 724-628-9600 on 119N in Connellsville).

For more information contact: Pastor Paul W. Prinkey, 109 Salvation Lane, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666
Telephone: 724-547-2151

SUMMERSVILLE, WV

April 21-27

REVIVAL: Church of God, 74 Armstrong Rd., Summersville, WV 26651

Evangelist: Brother Calvin Foster, Kensett, Arkansas

Service times: Mon.-Fri. 7:00 p.m.; Sat. 6:00 p.m.; Sun. 10:30 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

Visit our website @ www.ChurchofGodSummersvilleWV.com

For further information contact: Pastor Earl R. Borders at telephone: 304-872-4047

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